



Tracing The Familial Ethics In Thirukkural's Kamathupal

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Abstract

Throughout the history teaching Ethical values through stories, poems or literatures has been a very old system of moral education, ethics is the foundation of our human relationship to ourselves and the world around us. Ethics and Literature are deeply connected and inseparable. A good literary work has the ability to build a new sense of self in a reader. Literature is considered to be the perennial source of Ethics. Ethics and its relevant practice are essential in macro and micro, which is specified as a nation, group and individual. Ethics is built by humans and it is subject to changes and developments. This article attempts to surface how *Thirukkural's Kamathupal* (On Love) is an instrument to Familial Ethics. Family in the modern era is completely broken and shattered. Amidst this chaotic living, trust, love, hope and commitment are very much needed for a happy living. This paper will also highlight various dimensions of *Thirukkural's Kamathupal* and looks in to how it works for an individual's moral awareness and human behaviour. Today's time, today's culture in which we live is characterized mainly by pluralism with which we have to deal, with crises and turmoil that we are experiencing. If a man is loyal to his family, he does only good things to his family and to his family members, which will also be seen in his relation with society. Hence, the third section in *Thirukkural* is a crucial section and holds the greatest ethical values that are the urgent need for the human kind.

Keywords: Familial Ethics, Modern family setup, Chaotic life, Love.

Tracing the Familial Ethics in *Thirukkural's Kamathupal*

Thiruvalluvar's *Thirukkural* is considered to be the storehouse of ethics and values by the people of the world. The book has been divided into three broad divisions. All three parts deal with virtues. The first part is called "On Virtue" (*Arathuppal*) the second part is called as (*Porul*) "Material Interest" and the third part is called "On Love". *Thirukkural* expounds varieties of ethics in connection to the various aspects of life. This paper, "Tracing the Familial Ethics in *Thirukkural's Kamathupal*", intends to discover the familial ethics that are deep in the third section of *Thirukkural*. It will also examine how clearly the ethical values are depicted by Valluvar and how relevant this ancient text is to contemporary society. Through this paper an attempt has been made to give a solution for the shattered modern family system.

According to Valluvar's philosophy the human society has now reached a stage of development in its pilgrimage towards perfection and he calls this stage domestic life *Illaram*. In this stage of evolution there is one social order which produces a moral climate. This social order must be maintained by this moral climate is there. Only under this moral climate, a man can derive strength to move towards perfection that is envisaged in ascetic life *Thuravaram*. (Rev. J. Lazarus)

Ethics is considered to be a philosophical study of morality. The main aim of ethics is to dictate good moral values. It substantially works on the principle of how far the decisions and pursuit are rational and what principle humans adhere to. It is derived from the Greek word "ethos" (conduct), it is inclined to the thought, action and mentality of humans connected with the good and evil of the culture and tradition they belong to. It denotes how or what a man ought to do in the right contact, virtue and goodness. The knowledge on virtue and ethics is considered to be the foundation of a better human and better society. Values can be mentioned as practical science as it cures the sickness of evil from the minds of humans. Ethical values are the mixture of knowledge and habit which encapsulates its own scope. It is normative science which emphasizes moral standards, motives and other reflexive actions done by humans. Ethics does not fit into just one fixed subject of study but it glides into ambit annals of concepts and it mostly poses itself with the day to day life of human beings. This makes it an irresistible trait of human personality.

Ethics is a dictionary of moral quotes. Human beings are gifted with a distinctive quality called reasoning. Ethics guides humans to share an amicable relationship with his fellow beings and the environment around him in the present and in future. Values are considered to be progressing in a society only when their ideas are properly manifested in the thoughts and actions of the practitioners. People tend to change according to their convictions and as time rolls they become stays. In such circumstances, ethics continues to serve as a tool to direct and align people on a moral course.

Religion can be considered as one of the manifestations of ethics, the religion and ethics are inseparable. They work simultaneously to enrich humans in values. It takes is broadly divided into 7 types they are Descriptive ethics, Normative ethics, Virtue ethics, Deontology ethics, Consequential ethics, Meta-ethics and Applied ethics. This article is aimed to analyse Applied ethics in familial bonding with reference to *Thirukkural's Kamathupal*.

Applied ethics deals with the practice of righteousness in the private and public sphere. It roots in the stable subjects like the profession country family politics and other systems of the society. The domains of the applied ethics are Decision ethics, Professional ethics, Clinical ethics Business ethics, Organisational ethics and Social ethics (Frankena). Applied

ethics in *Thirukkural* is twofold. It constructs value in humans and this develops a critical and moral attitude in them. *Thirukkural's* didactic tone helps men in getting familiar with the duties that he ought to practice in his family and in the society he belongs to. It teaches humans to grow a code of moral personality in them and creates consciousness towards the duties that he is destined to do to society and his family. Its deliberate motive is to remove evil and harvest goodness in the mind and life of every single human on earth through its thought provoking and virtuous couplets.

Thirukkural is the most noteworthy literary work which is considered to be the best ethical treatise of all Indian literature or even the world literature to be precise. The historians and literarians considered it to be written 2000 years ago. It is one among a few literary works that has withstood the harsh course of time. Though it was written 2000 years back its relevance to the present scenario is incredible. It has been translated into many languages of the world. G. U. Pope, and V.V.S. Aiyer translated it into English from its origin language Tamil. This book remains as a valuable tool in the passing of values and righteousness tenets to the younger generation. In Tamil there is an old adage that speaks on moral edification, "*Aalum Vaelum Pallukuruthi, Naalum Rendum Sollukkuruthi*" (Proverb). It means that what strengthens our teeth is the twigs of Banyan and Neem and what strengthens our prescription and knowledge is the quarantines of *Naaladiyar* (a Tamil classical work) and couplets of *Thirukkural*.

Valluvar bluntly questions people that if one performs his duty at home properly there are no way he becomes recluse or abandon (46). In couplet 431 he points out that the way to retain youthfulness is through right conduct, he declares that it is the foundation of a happy life (138). From birth to death the divine poet touches on all aspects of life. This is the main reason which makes people read and continue to read it even in this 21st century. *Thirukkural* consists of 1330 couplets (*Kurals*). The first part is entitled "On Virtue" (*Aram*) has 38 chapters the second part has 70 chapters and its title is "On Wealth" (*Poruppal*) and the third section is "On Love" (*Kamathuppal*) which consists of 25 chapters. Each chapter consists of 10 couplets. The book through all these sections advises people that love, lust and wealth must be regulated by virtues to attain salvation in one's life.

Valluvar's *Thirukkural* is known by various sobriquets like The Ultimate Scriptures, The Divine Book, Infallible Words, Medicinal Praise, The Tamil Scripture, and The Common Scripture. The first part "On Virtue" (*Arathuppal*) is divided into four parts: Prologue, Domestic Virtue, Ascetic Virtue and Destiny. It starts with "The Glorification of God" and ends with "Destiny". There is no other book in any of the languages spoken by humans which is akin to *Thirukkural* says Albert Schweitzer. The great Tamil poet Bharati calls *Thirukkural*, "a gift to the world".

The second part "On Wealth" explains values to be practiced in politics rights of citizens and law of the society to create an egalitarian society. It is divided into 70 divisions. It starts with Regal Greatness and ends with Business.

Through scrutinized reading it is evident that the poet has not materialised globally as a way of life in general or Tamil in particular. This is why it is loved by the people of the world for ages. It is said that it is *Thirukkural* which has been translated into many languages next to the Bible.

The third part of *Thirukkural* deals about love and sex, is considered as an integral part of human life by the poet. Love and sex is the cornerstone of familial bonding, without it human would have been animals. The third part of the book is divided into two divisions with 25 chapters on Secret of Sexual Love and Chest, Material love. There is no passion without love and nothing on earth would survive without love and sex and there exists no domestic life. Sex and love is the foundation of socio-familial life. It is this desire that turned humans into humans from a wandering beast and prompted them to create family, virtue, kindness and beauty. Here in this article an attempt has been made to depict the Familial ethics in "On Love" (*Kamathuppal*).

Our families are determined to be the school to learn all ethical values. Familial ethics extends from relationship between husband and wife to the upbringing of children with proper code of conduct. This paper will examine Love, Sex and Marriage in *Kamathupal*, under the lens of morality. It is intended to uncover a new exciting territory in Applied ethics that may help to run a proper basics societal unit. Every family has implicit principles for everyday living, few such principles are harmony, sharing and success. *Thiruvalluvar* has pointed out that for better family the following values like love, purpose, principle, responsibility, nursing thoughts deeds and words, future scope are essential. He gives all these with the husband and wife relationship as centre from his *Kamathupal* chapter. He States through his Couplets that the relationship between husband and wife plays a major role in building a happy family. Regarding love he says that, Only those women who love and have their love returned by their partners find the stoneless fruit of love and enjoy it without nothing hampering their sexual union (1191).

The poet says that only true love which is properly reciprocated can give complete pleasure in a relationship between husband and wife. In couplet 1192 Valluvar points that wives are like drought ridden earth which gets fertile only when the sky rain is poured abundantly. Here the rain is a metaphor of a husband's love towards his wife.

Valluvar when speaking about equality in love between husband and wife says that, Love is good only when both partners have it like the balanced load carried by one. But it is a heavy load if it is lopsided. (1196)

The Deiva Pulvar (divine poet), preachers that love showered equally by a husband and wife will be a pleasure where as if one always receives and never reciprocates the same love turns into an unbearable load.

Living for the sake of each other is the major quality of a successful relationship. , *Thiruvalluvar* on speaking about this undeniable quality deliberates that,

There is nothing so sweet as love because the pain of separation disappears at the very thought of the beloved. (1202) *Thiruvalluvar* declares that separation is brutal but amidst the time's brutality a little thought about the husband can bring so much joy in the sickened heart of the beloved.

On sulking and quarrel between the husband and wife Valluvar paints that leaving the beloved alone after a quarrel without any sweet consoling words is like uprooting a weak plant which would live if there is enough water.

Going away without making up and having a lovely union with her who sulk is like cutting out the route of a tender creeper which droops from lack of water. (1303)

Thiruvalluvar pens that sexual life in a relationship will be unpleasant and discontent if mutual respect, love and affection remains at scarce. Hence from the above points it understood that the titular significance of love remains as the binding code of a beautiful family. The Universal Poet has presented his thoughts in his writing with an imaginable beauty and delight. His use of words and his choice of ideas are unique and elegant that is why most of the translators fail in replicating the original work. Thus his work has proved the fact that Ancient literature or source of inexplicable wisdom. It is no doubt that *Thirukkural* is the road to enlightened living.

Thiruvalluvar says in "Domestic Life" that there is nothing so fortunate for a man then to get a good wife. If he is also blessed with good children it is like decking oneself in valuable ornaments. He also adds that a good wife is the power of a husband, especially when he face is troubles (60). "Worth of the Life Partner".

Marital life is beautiful and meaningful only if it is based on love and virtue (45).

It is crystal clear that Valluvar has depicted all the aspects of Applied ethics in his Magnum Corpus work. It is now in the hands of the people to understand and execute it in their life for virtuous living.

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